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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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Tunisia - UAR: Bourguiba's use of a public meeting of the Arab League to denounce Nasir's domination of the league machinery and UAR subversive activity against other governments seems almost certain to leave the Tunisian leader isolated within the Arab world. It may also weaken his position in Tunisia as well. League delegations from Morocco and Iraq, two league countries generally inclined toward independence of the UAR, quickly dissociated themselves from the Tunisian action. Cairo radio is naming Bourguiba as the imperialists' choice to oppose Nasir; he is being compared to assassinated Iraqi leader Nuri Said.

[REDACTED]

13 Oct 58

DAILY BRIEF

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Algeria: The Algerian rebel government now appears willing to negotiate with Paris without prior French agreement to independence for Algeria. A rebel newspaper in Tunis has published an editorial which amounts to an invitation to start negotiating, and an FLN official has indicated the rebels are eager for talks. The rebels intend to release some French prisoners, regardless of Paris' response to their move, in an effort to "improve the atmosphere." [redacted]

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Afghanistan: A previous report of a \$30,000,000 Soviet loan to Afghanistan has not been confirmed and is now regarded as doubtful (see Central Intelligence Bulletin of 3 October). Financial arrangements for a Soviet civil air assistance agreement for Afghanistan may still be under negotiation. [redacted]
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Tunisian President Attacks UAR Role in Arab League

The anti-UAR blast delivered in Cairo on 11 October by Tunisian President Bourguiba's representative at a public session of the Arab League Council called especially to welcome Tunisia into the league probably presages an early rupture between Cairo and Tunis. It may precipitate an all-out effort by Nasir to oust Bourguiba and install a more subservient regime in Tunis.

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The speech by Tunisia's delegate, accusing "some Arab countries" of attempting to dominate the league, and a follow-up statement issued by the Tunisian Embassy in Cairo, calling cooperation between Tunisia and the UAR "impossible," are the culminating products of Bourguiba's long-developing antagonism toward the Nasir regime. This antagonism, which is felt much more strongly by the President than by other Tunisian leaders, springs particularly from Cairo's continued harboring and apparent clandestine material support of Bourguiba's exiled political rival, Salah ben Youssef. In late September Bourguiba recalled his ambassador in Cairo over this issue.

The UAR, probably encouraged by the Moroccan and Iraqi delegates' quick dissociation of their governments from the Tunisian action, has already launched a bitter press and radio campaign against Bourguiba. The position expressed by Tunisia's representative is being equated with the views of the "imperialist press," and Bourguiba himself has been castigated as "the imperialists'" choice to "check Nasir."

In addition to strengthening those elements in Tunisia which were already either hostile to Bourguiba or at least increasingly critical of his attitude toward Nasir, Bourguiba's open attack on the UAR will further reduce his already circumscribed ability to act independently of the Algerian rebels, who continue to be strongly entrenched in Tunisia. This is likely to be reflected almost immediately in the negotiations with France, which Tunisia now is reportedly ready to begin, over the status of the French air and naval base at Bizerte.

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Algerian Rebels Step Up Efforts to Induce Peace Talks

The Algerian rebel government formed last month by the National Liberation Front (FLN) has launched a new bid for early cease-fire talks with France. Possibly influenced in part by their inability to prevent an overwhelming vote in favor of the De Gaulle constitution on 28 September and by the unique position of authority which De Gaulle enjoys pending the establishment of new French institutions, the rebels appear to have adopted a more flexible attitude toward such talks. Heretofore, they have demanded France's prior recognition of at least Algeria's "right" to independence.

An editorial published on 10 October in the FLN's official newspaper El Moujahid reiterates the "ineluctable" will of the Algerian people to win independence, but fails to attach any qualification to an offer to meet French representatives "at any moment to determine the military and political conditions of a cease-fire." Subsequently, Ferhat Abbas, premier in the rebel cabinet, told an American journalist in Tunis that the creation of the Algerian provisional government and the consolidation of De Gaulle's authority made it possible to drop any preconditions for peace talks, since "any time the French negotiate with us now, this will in itself imply recognition of Algeria's right to independence."

Meanwhile, in an acknowledged effort to establish a "new climate," the rebel leaders have announced their intention to release shortly about 100 of an unknown but probably not very large number of French soldiers held captive by the FLN army. The leaders are also reportedly attempting to stop attacks at least "on persons" in France. However, any significant diminution of rebel activity in Algeria--which has recently returned to its "normal" level following a period of more intensified guerrilla operations during September--seems unlikely at this time.

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